

## The History of the Susquehanna Club



Today's Susquehanna Club at the Defense Distribution Susquehanna Pennsylvania installation located at New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, bears little resemblance to the structure from which it originated. Following is a brief history of what was once known as the Fairview Farm and its surrounding area.

Situated in the lower half of the village of New Market toward the South Mountains, the Fairview Farm occupied a desirable location along the Susquehanna River near the mouth of the Yellow Breeches Creek, in northern Fairview Township. Chronologically known in earlier days as Chambers', Chesney's, Simpson's ferry property, and Cherry Lane Farm, this spot was on the route much traveled from Philadelphia and Lancaster to Carlisle, and points south and west. Earlier still, a famous pathway for the Convoy and Shawanese Indians, observable from the Susquehanna River banks between the mouths of both the Yellow Breeches and Fishing Creek, crossed through this land.

In the early 1700's, John Harris, father of the founder of Harrisburg, owned the land along the Susquehanna River from New Cumberland to the Fairview Farm. He was an Indian trader, and at the mouth of the Yellow Breeches was a considerable Indian village. The locally born, U.S. Army and Revolutionary War veteran General Michael Simpson purchased the Fairview Farm along with the ferry rights across the River, in 1784. General Simpson made many improvements to the property. He built an elegant stone mansion on the farm, and in 1794, had the honor of entertaining as his guest, President George Washington, making his return from the Whisky Insurrection. Henry Mosser and William Culbertson laid out the village of New Market just north of the farm in 1807. General Simpson died at his home in June of 1813. A year later, the property was purchased by Jacob Miller Haldeman.

Jacob Haldeman was a successful business owner and land developer. He bought the water rights at the mouth of the Yellow Breeches in 1806, along with a dam and forge. During the War of 1812, he supplied the Government arsenal with his superior iron. He envisioned a town that could compete with Harrisburg, founded in 1785 and established as the capital of Pennsylvania in 1812, and purchased forty-five acres of land along the Susquehanna River in

1811; about a year later he purchased an additional twenty-six acres. This two-land acquisition was called Haldemantown. However, the deed to that property was recorded as the town of “Cumberland,” at the Cumberland County Court House in Carlisle. With the successful growth of Cumberland, a U.S. Post Office was established in August 1827. Claiming a conflict with mail addressed to Cumberland, Maryland, the U.S. Government changed the name of the Post Office to “New” Cumberland. Eventually by 1831, the town fathers of Cumberland reluctantly accepted the “New.” The community was elevated to the status of “Borough,” and the village of New Cumberland was officially and permanently, established.

After acquiring the former Simpson Farm, Haldeman resold it for a profit, and then repurchased it with improvements. Known then as the Haldeman’s Fairview Farm, the total property included 400 acres of land at the cost of \$15,500. The fertile land below the property was at one time a swamp with the Marsh Run passing through it, also purchased by Haldeman, it became the Marsh Run Farm. In September of 1830, Jacob deeded the properties to a son, J. C. Haldeman to inherit upon reaching 21 years of age. Although the magnificent mansion built by the General was destroyed by fire around 1880, the farms remained in the Haldeman family, deeded to J. C.’s wife, Elizabeth H. Longnecker, until 1917.

In 1917, most of the Haldeman estate, including the 231 acre Cherry Lane Farm, and the 57 acre Marsh Run Farm, became part of 832 acres purchased from eight local farmers by the U.S. Government, authorized by President Woodrow Wilson to build a storage depot for the U.S. Army. Completed by early April 1918 and referred originally as the Marsh Run Storage Depot, the installation was renamed the New Cumberland Army Depot in 1962, and in 1997, the DDC was established as the Headquarters for the Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa.

Used today for dining and social functions, the Susquehanna Club is a renovated German bank barn recorded as being located directly north of the Haldeman mansion. Since belonging to the U.S. Military, it was used to house the horses and mules that pulled the depot supply wagons, a stock barn with a capacity holding up to 30 animals. By the beginning of the 1940’s, most all of the original farm buildings, including several other barns, had been demolished. This remaining barn had the good fortune to be designated as a future Officer’s “Mess Hall”, or Club. Major renovations began in May of 1942 to rehabilitate and convert the 56’ by 100’ barn into an Officer’s Club, and eventually, the Susquehanna Club. A recent addition to the structure offers a splendid view of its one constant companion for more than one hundred years, the Susquehanna River.

To learn more about what The Susquehanna Club offers regarding usage for social functions and dining, contact Sharen Ewell at 770-3030.





